



CITY OF

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## Historic District Fact Sheet

### Signs and Awnings

This Fact Sheet is not a substitute for the ordinance, but addresses common questions about City ordinances. For further information, please call the Building Department.

All permit applications are available from the Building Department and at [cityofypsilanti.com/permits](http://cityofypsilanti.com/permits).

Completed applications may be dropped off at the Building Department.

### *City Hall*

One South Huron  
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

#### Building

3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, City Hall  
Phone: (734) 482-1025  
[cityofypsilanti.com/157](http://cityofypsilanti.com/157)

#### Planning

3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, City Hall  
Phone: (734) 483-9646  
[cityofypsilanti.com/planning](http://cityofypsilanti.com/planning)

#### Historic District

3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, City Hall  
Phone: (734) 483-9646  
[cityofypsilanti.com/hd](http://cityofypsilanti.com/hd)

All permits, fees, and factsheets can be found at [cityofypsilanti.com/permits](http://cityofypsilanti.com/permits).

### **SIGNS**

In general, signs should not be designed as a permanent feature, as the life of a given building normally exceeds the life of any business located in that building. Animated signs and roof billboards are prohibited by the zoning ordinance and will not be approved.

**Back-lit Signs:** Back-lit signs are strongly discouraged within the Historic District. When a back-lit sign is approved, only the letters may emit light, the background shall be opaque.

**Wall Signs:** Signs which are attached to the façade of a building, such as just above storefront windows, are normally constructed of aluminum, wood or MDO (medium density overlay). Signs shall be weatherproof and thus not constructed of any materials which cannot withstand the elements. Signs of this "board" type shall have trim around all edges to protect the sign from water damage.

**Neon Signs:** Pre-existing neon signs may be restored. The use of new neon signs must be appropriate to the character of the building.

### **Installation Methods:**

- Signs must always be installed without causing undue damage to the fabric of the building.
- All installation devices (screws, nails, bolts, anchors, etc.) shall be corrosion-resistant and of a material that will not react adversely with adjacent materials. In most instances, stainless steel will be the metal of choice.
- Signs may be attached to wood surfaces with nails or screws.
- Signs that must be affixed to a brick or stone wall shall be attached with installation devices located at the mortar joints wherever possible.
- Standoffs shall be used when installing a panel sign to a building in order to provide air circulation between the sign and the surface of the building.
- Holes created to allow the insertion of installation devices shall be caulked with an exterior grade, high performance sealant to prevent water from entering the structure and causing damage to the fabric of the building.

### **AWNINGS**

Varying styles of awnings may be used within the Historic District. The style and type that is acceptable for a particular location depends on the style of the building on which it will be installed. Owners should consider matching the profile of awnings on adjacent structures.

### **Materials for Awnings:**

- Awnings with the Historic District shall NOT be translucent.
- Awnings may be constructed of many different materials. Canvas awnings are preferred but vinyl, acrylic and other materials may be considered.
- Lights under awnings may be approved provided light does not show through the awning.
- Metal, fiberglass and unpainted aluminum awnings are generally not in keeping with the style of buildings within the Historic District and are not likely to be approved but are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

### **Lettering for Awnings:**

- Awnings should not, in general, serve as the primary sign for a business.
- If an awning is intended to serve as a sign, lettering may be added to the valance only. Any other proposed uses of lettering will be examined on a case-by-case basis.